



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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Superintendent, First Lady accept international reading award

Wisconsin among five top states in reading education

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster joined First Lady Jessica Doyle Friday in Milwaukee to accept the International Reading Association's (IRA's) Five-Star Policy Program award, which recognizes states and provinces with effective reading programs.

"Wisconsin educators recognize that the literacy experiences of our children will shape their character, decisions, and quality of life as adults," Burmaster said. "Wisconsin is dedicated to ensuring teacher and administrator quality; educators who understand that we are always teaching a child to read and that a child is not only learning to read but becoming a life-long reader."

The IRA's Five-Star Policy Recognition Program entails a two-stage, two-year process. In stage one, states or provinces complete a nomination, providing documentation of its reading policies for each of the five student rights for reading instruction. In stage two, the state or provincial council works with government officials and IRA representatives to determine if the promising policies are implemented.

Wisconsin was recognized for the strength of its teacher training and licensing programs, both for general licensure and for reading specialists, and for its professional improvement requirements for license renewal. The state's Reading Evaluation and

Five Policy Stars = Five Student Rights

Each state's application was evaluated based on how well it met student rights to excellent literacy instruction. The IRA's five policy stars or student rights indicate that

1. Students have the right to be taught reading by certified teachers who are trained to teach reading and keep their skills up to date through effective professional development.
2. Students who struggle as readers have the right to receive additional help from qualified reading specialists.
3. Students have a right of access to a wide variety of books and other reading materials in classroom and school library media centers, as well to access technology that will enhance their reading achievement.
4. Students have the right to be taught beginning reading through methods chosen on the basis of their needs as learners, not based on one particular mandated method.
5. Students have the right to reading assessment with multiple methods that provide information about their strengths and needs as learners and lead to clear implications for instruction.

(more)

Demonstration of Success (R.E.A.D.S.) program was cited for implementing comprehensive reading programs that reduced referrals for special education placement by 15.2 percent, increased national percentile reading scores, narrowed the achievement gap for Asian and African American children, and eliminated the gap for Hispanic children. The Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program and the department's home/school partnership program and Parent Leadership Corps also were cited as contributing to strong reading policies that support students' learning.

The state's level of local control, which includes textbook selection and local curriculum decisions, earned recognition for contributing to reading instruction to meet students' needs. Wisconsin's laws requiring school boards to provide library media services staffed by a licensed library media professional as well as the Cooperative Children's Book Center, statewide summer reading program, model academic standards and other program and curriculum planning guides, and BadgerLink, the state's on-line library, contribute to a wealth of literacy resources for schools and students. The state's student assessment system; the Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS), the statewide on-line report card; and the department-issued suggestions for developing grade-advancement policies support multiple assessments to evaluate student learning.

"We can be proud that Wisconsin is being recognized as a state that is implementing policies in each of the five star areas of children's rights to excellent literacy instruction," Burmaster said. "The fundamental skill that separates children who succeed from those who don't is reading. Our New Wisconsin Promise ensures a quality education for every child and focuses on reading and a balanced literacy standard that calls for all students to read at grade level."

The IRA Five-Star Policy Recognition award, announced last May, was presented to Burmaster and Doyle at Friday's luncheon for the Wisconsin Reading Association's Feb. 3-5 convention in Milwaukee. West Virginia, Connecticut, Indiana, and Kansas also earned IRA awards for their state reading policies.

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NOTE: Additional information about the International Reading Association's Five-Star Policy Recognition Program is available at < http://www.reading.org/association/awards/five_star.html >.